



Disclaimer: I hope you will find these notes helpful. They are not a complete representation of the meeting, but rather the highlights of topics discussed. Feel free to contact Erin Verplank or Zachary Burton at Westfield City Services Center: communications@westfield.in.gov or (317) 804-3001 if you have any questions.

MEETING SUMMARY

August 26, 2014

Meeting began at 6:30 p.m. at Grand Junction Brewing Co.

The meeting began with brief introductions from attendees following social time.

Mayor Cook gave an update on Grand Park. Should have around 800,000 visits by end of year.

Explained that when people register for events, they book hotels through company and tournaments and city receives part of that revenue.

Noted difference between “visits” and “visitors”: every time one person visits the park is a visit.

Hotels will invest when tourism is demonstrated. They don’t just move here because we tell them to.

The goal of the park is for it to operate at a break-even point. Showed figures through July 18. Showed graphs for revenue and expenses. Noted that the first year would be difficult to project because of start-up costs that would not recur in coming years.

Management agencies market the park for tournaments. We don’t really know how to do that better than them.

Described process for sponsorship and naming rights. Like hotels, it is easier to market something that has a year under its belt than something that is just pretty pictures. This is something that is unique in the country, not only due to its size but also due to the scope of its operation. We bring in people from all across the world.

Facility is a showcase league for scouting for baseball. One event had 400 college coaches were present in one tournament.

Rec leagues are out there nearly every night. WYSA went through a reorganization in the spring with Carmel United. Merged and became Indiana Fire, affiliated with the Chicago Fire. One of the largest organizations for soccer in the country. Feeder system for development leagues to pro.

Grand Park has been used for other things more and more as other people see the potential for it.

Mike Mundy: Indiana Bulls have been doing fine. Played almost 4K games this year. 41K different participants. Midwest League is our real meat and butter. We had 51 colleges represented. They go back and start spreading the word and that's how we advertise. We've got this Mecca. College coaches can come here and see all the prospects you want to see all in one place. We had PBR Futures tournament – 162 different colleges represented. Those people go home and the praise we get about Grand Park is phenomenal. National 18U tournament – 102 teams. This Fall Sep 14 first annual college softball tournament, D-1 schools. Coming in for one day. Somewhere in the neighborhood 3,000 people that day. All advertising for Grand Park and Westfield. Kids from Riley Hospital are going to come out that day. Professional team: September – 200 players will be coming in trying out the team. We have already booked phenomenal tournaments for next year: Great Lakes Valley Conference Tournament (D-2). Grand Park Frenzy (last year had 265 teams). The Park's gonna be full next year.

Don Rawson: I have been fortunate in my career to have been part of great facilities. This facility is outstanding. It's a lot of fun to be out there. Talked about programs. First thing I focus on is health and safety of everybody out there. Take a longer view of what has to happen to make the park successful. This park brings people into the community who will stay a little longer and spend their money longer. Balance bringing people here to the park with the economics of it. It has to be the best park that they experience. Half the parks that are this size, don't have local use throughout the week. We balance it and are good stewards of the property. 153 teams coming here this weekend. Will translate into about 12,000 park visits. We try to work with the city to make sure these people know that there are great restaurants here to keep people in Hamilton Co. and Westfield. Construction adds to the mix, but when that road is done it will help sell Grand Park. Big 10 is looking at using Grand Park once championship field is completed. Every time you have a new project like this, you have to learn.

Emily Bible: On top of what you've heard, we have staff and interns. We make sure someone is there all the time. This summer had eight interns. Provided excellent hospitality at the park. Almost had a Disney-like staff who ended up learning a lot about the park, handed out fan guides. Positive energy was contagious. Got experience in their skills. We brought on one of our interns to a staff member. He will run internship program next year. Will be tied to operational side of the park and make it run.

Let's not forget the purpose of Grand Park: to create a family friendly atmosphere and for economic development, grow our tax base. Touched on housing developments.

Creating family environment for our community – Family Circle.

Discussed expected and unexpected experiences at Grand Park (high number of baseball players didn't expect, harsh winter and Bermuda fields, etc). Didn't expect issues with the contractor.

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Pleasant surprise was the traffic – how smooth it was. Largely due to staggering start times.

Some fields are still not done, due to weather setbacks.

Regarding pick-up games: Schools have facilities, we have plenty of facilities for pick-up games.

A discussion was held regarding rugby being played at Grand Park. Costs associated with repairing fields following rugby matches and type of turf were mentioned as important variables.

Jim Ake concluded the meeting shortly after 8 p.m.